

E 432
374

SPEECH

OF

HON. ALEXANDER R. BOTELER,

OF VIRGINIA,

ON THE

ORGANIZATION OF THE HOUSE.

~~25 1 1860~~
~~1 1 1860~~

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES JANUARY 25, 1860.

WASHINGTON, D. C

WILLIAM H. MOORE, PRINTER.

1860.

E 436

1374

SPEECH

OF

HON. ALEXANDER R. BOTELER.

OF VIRGINIA,

ON

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE HOUSE.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 25, 1860.

The House having under consideration the election of Speaker—

Mr. BOTELER said: Mr. Clerk, I have no set speech to make. I have not come here to-day with that intention. I have sought the floor simply for the purpose of submitting a few suggestive remarks, which, I trust, will serve in some degree to promote the object which many here are sincerely desirous of accomplishing—of bringing this discussion to a close, and perfecting the organization of the House. Sir, I do not stand here this morning to make any appeals to the prejudices, the passions, or the sectional pride of those who represent that quarter of the Confederacy from whence I came. I have no desire to indulge in any pyrotechnic display of “glittering generalities,” which, however much they may dazzle and amuse, are but illy calculated to bring about a practical solution of the difficulty in which we are involved,—for like summer lightning, they “play around the head but do not touch the heart.” Nor is it my purpose to deal in any unjust, ungenerous, or unnecessarily harsh denunciation of those upon the other side of the Chamber, who, claiming to be conservative, are here in the exercise of their undoubted rights as Representatives, entertaining sentiments utterly adverse from the sentiments held by my constituents and myself. I say I shall not indulge in any unnecessarily harsh denunciations of them. I recognize the fact that we who are assembled here to discharge the legitimate duties of legislation devolved upon us by our constituents, coming as we do from different and distant portions of this vast Confederacy, some from the rugged, rock-ribbed hills of the North, some from the ever-blooming plains of the South, some with the dust of the distant prairies on their feet, and others with the spray of either ocean on their brows, representing interests and opinions as variant as are the latitudes in which we live, must necessarily differ on many points; that it is not to be expected of us there should be perfect uniformity of sentiment, especially in regard to those great questions of public concernment which, from time to time, stir up the depths of human feeling in our land. But, sir, it is expected, and our country demands, patriotism requires at our hands, that, coming here as we do under these circumstances, we should remember, in the language of a distinguished citizen of my good old State, “that we have a country to serve, as well as a party to obey.”

But, sir, what do we behold? What is the spectacle which this House presents? On this side of it, amongst those with whom it has been my pride and my pleasure to act in good faith from first to last, what have we seen? Three distinct organizations: a

MS. S. 1. 6. 13. 5. 1. 1. 9

Democratic party, a southern Opposition party, and an anti-Lecompton party; for we must recognize the last named as a party, since, though insignificant in number, it is very potential in its influence. Well, sir, what have they been doing? They know, they feel, the country knows, that it is only by a union amongst them all that we can beat down the nominee of the Republican party. They profess to be honest in their desire to accomplish that, and I know they are honest in their opposition to that nominee. But yet, with the majority and with the power in their hands, they have never once exercised that power to secure the object which they profess to be anxiously desirous of attaining. And why? Because they have allowed their party prejudices and their party pride to interfere with their patriotism. There has not been a ballot taken since this struggle began, in which there has been a union of the different anti-Republican parties; and there will be no election resulting in the success of this side of the House unless there is such a union—a cordial and hearty union amongst us all.

Now, sir, let me illustrate our position here. We are all on board the same ship, the glorious old ship which our fathers built for us. They laid its keel; they fashioned its bulwarks; they forged the anchor of its hope, and unfurling at its fore "the flag of the free hearts only home," they launched it upon the ocean of national existence; they gave us a chart by which to sail our ship; that chart is the Constitution; and we have differed heretofore amongst ourselves earnestly, sincerely, openly differed, as freemen should differ and will differ, in regard to the construction of our chart and in regard to the best mode of working our ship. Some of us have been for sailing her upon this tack, some upon that tack; some have been for taking in a sail, others for shaking out a reef. We believe that, under Providence, our ship has been built to be the life-boat of the world; and throughout the progress of the voyage we have been constantly engaged in saving those who have come on board to us from the wrecks, the rafts, and rotten governments of the Old World. We have taken them into our vessel when they have been swimming for their lives. We have spread before them the table of our bounty; we have saved their lives and have given them an equal participation in the profits of our voyage; yet some of us (and I amongst the number) have seen, and seen with surprise and pain, that after they have been brought on board the ship, a portion of them have shown a propensity to interfere in the management of it, and we have said to them: "We have brought you here to save you, and to make you prosperous, happy, and free; but we are not willing that you shall take hold of the tiller and handle the ropes, until you have been here long enough to know one rope from another." And this has been a source of honest difference of opinion amongst those on board, whilst all of us have loved the old craft, from truck to keel, with all our hearts. Well, sir, thus we have voyaged; and whilst thus differing, what has happened? We have been drifting towards the breakers; we have been insensibly drawn towards a lee shore, where no light-house sends its friendly ray! A storm has arisen upon us; we hear the spirit of the tempest shrieking in the shrouds; clouds of danger, difficulty, and doubt are dimming the haven of our hopes, and threatening to burst in desolation over our heads! And not only that; but, sir, we see yonder "a band of mutineers" determined to take possession of the vessel; men associated together to dispossess us of our rights, and to deprive us of our property, who would thrust us down the hold, and batten the hatches over our heads. And yet, in the midst of all these imminent, deadly dangers which are threatening the destruction of the ship, we have been engaged here for weeks past in a disgraceful squabble upon theoretical points of political navigation!

Now, Mr. Clerk, I ask, is it right, is it reasonable, can we answer to our constituents,

and to the country, if we continue to allow these paltry, miserable differences to interfere with our duty, and to prevent cordial, united action among the conservatives of the House against those whom we recognize, and whom we are bound to recognize as our common enemy?

Sir, I have no practical suggestion to offer; there are older heads than mine here to do that; but I do protest against the continuance of this most unnecessary discussion. For myself, the House will do me the justice to say that I have possessed my seat in silence upon this floor during the seven weary weeks we have been in session, whilst this exciting discussion has been going on, and whilst the infamous Abolition outrage upon the district I have the honor to represent has been the fruitful inspiration of almost every gentleman who has risen to address the House. Mr. Clerk, I was present at that horrible Harper's Ferry raid; I was a witness to that abominable outrage; I saw the blood of my friends shed in the streets of Harper's Ferry; and if there is a man here who has a right to discuss that subject, it is myself; and yet I have forborne. I have remained silent for various reasons, not the least of which is, that the distinguished Senator before me (Mr. Mason) is engaged in the investigation of the facts connected with the whole affair, and will present them fully and fairly, at the proper time, before the country, to leave it judge of them, after which I shall avail myself of a suitable opportunity to mention some circumstances to the House concerning that foray which I wish the country to know, and which justice to my constituents requires that it shall know from me.

There is yet another reason which, I must confess, has also influenced me in this matter. I know (and I have been painfully conscious of it whenever my mind has reverted to that dark day) that when the heart feels most, the tongue refuses to perform its wonted task.

And, sir, when I have heard gentlemen on the other side of the floor stand up and derisively refer to that infamous outrage, I have been hardly able to retain my seat and refrain from the expression of my indignation in terms which would not have sounded parliamentary. My mind, sir, has again and again, during this discussion, gone back to that gloomy October evening, when I stood by the side of a friend, and laid my hand upon his brow where the death-damp was gathering, while the blood was gushing from his noble heart, and I have been often disposed to say, in apology for my forbearance:

"Oh! pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!"

For I tell you, sir, that in my opinion, the leaders of the Abolition party, who are seeking to control the organization of this House, and to obtain possession of the Government, are as much the murderers of my friends at Harper's Ferry as were old John Brown and his deluded followers; and I think that the committee engaged in the investigation in my State, and the investigation on the part of the Senate, will prove that the agitation of the slavery question by the great leaders of the Republican party has been the direct cause of the Harper's Ferry invasion.

I tell you further, sir, the Commonwealth of Virginia has come to the determination that this shall be the end of it; that this slavery agitation shall cease, so far as she is concerned; that her territory shall be protected from a repetition of that bloody raid. She has taken some indemnity for the past and means to have security for the future. And, sir, to make her determination good, she has buckled on her armor, and her borders are now bristling with bayonets, for she feels compelled to take the guardianship of her rights and her honor into her own hands. Heretofore she has trusted to the tie of consanguinity; heretofore she has relied upon the linked shields of all the States for her

protection ; but, sir, at a moment when she dreamed not of it, she has been smitten upon the cheek. Our honored old mother has been struck a blow which has roused her children from their false security and rallied them to her rescue. We now discover that we must depend upon our own right arm to protect our State from further outrage, so long as there remains a "Republican" organization in Congress and the country. And, men of the North, why will you persist in maintaining that organization? What good do you expect to effect by it? You formed it, so you have said, for the sole purpose of making Kansas a free State. You have Kansas, and when she comes into this Union, she will come in "free." If there be any other purpose that you expect to accomplish by it, it must be to transfer your "irrepressible conflict" from the Territories to the States.

But, gentlemen of the other side, I know there are some among you who profess to be conservative, and are conservative, as compared with the moving spirits of your party. The distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CORWY) who sits before me, and who has entertained us and held this House for two days in listening admiration, by his intellectual efforts, claims to be—I wish he were so in reality—"the leader of the Republican party;" but how few are they who gather around him, who will recognize him as their leader, and will endorse the sentiments he has uttered here yesterday and the day before. When I look at him, when I see him there amongst them—a triton amongst the minnows—when I see him there, sir, my mind goes back to the literature of my boyish days, and I remember how it was that once upon a time Gulliver, in his Travels, laid himself down to sleep in the country of the Lilliputians; how the pigmies climbed upon his person and wound their tiny chains about him; how they bound his hands, and so led him, a spectacle of wonder, through the land. Oh, sir, if I could but make such an appeal to that distinguished gentleman as would awaken a responsive feeling in his heart, his patriotic throbs would burst the bonds which bind him to the earth; he would stand erect in the frightened presence of his diminutive associates, and would march forth with a firm tread from the low miasmatic marshes of sectionalism, and join us here upon the high ground of nationality, where the flag of the Union floats "with not a stripe erased or polluted, or a single star obscured." [Applause from the Democratic benches and in the galleries.] And the leader (Mr. SHERMAN) whom they recognize, the leader who bears their banner, I listened to his explanation, or rather his attempt at explanation, made a few days since, with sincere sympathy for him. In my very soul I pity him! And it is with wonder and amazement that I behold a gentleman with the traits which that gentleman is said to have—and he must have noble traits who, during so many weeks of conflict, can keep friends around him in unbroken ranks, persisting in their efforts to place him in the third position under our Government—to see such a gentleman permit himself to remain for one hour more before the country, as he is, according to his own account of himself, and the account his friends have given of him, in connection with the Helper Book.

What has he told the House? What has his friend who nominated him (Mr. CORWY) told this House? That he signed the recommendation of the Helper Book at the solicitation of a friend who came to him and asked him to sign it; that he took the precaution to inquire of the friend whether there would be anything objectionable in the compilation, and was assured that there would not be; that the book would be prepared by a committee, &c. Well, sir, what has that committee done? They have put forth a book under the sanction of Mr. SHERMAN's name, which is everywhere denounced as objectionable, and which is, unquestionably, a most infamous publication; a book which he himself intimates his objection to, and, as I understand, desires an opportunity to denounce as it deserves. They have deceived him; they have betrayed him; they have

made him their victim, their dupe, ay, their tool; and he submits to it all! Yes, sir, it is admitted that they have deceived him, for he allows the inference to be made that he does not endorse this most infamous Helper book. I am told, indeed, that many gentlemen on the other side—if the gentleman from Missouri will withdraw his resolution—one after the other will rise and denounce that book. That is what they say in private. They are ready to denounce it now, and well they may be; for, sir, I would like to see a man in the American Congress who would rise in his place and endorse the sentiments of that book, after all that has occurred within the last three months. If any man should do so here in our presence, we would see a traitor standing in our midst!

Mr. Clerk, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. SHERMAN) still occupies his position. Week after week he has occupied it, and Heaven only knows how long he will continue to hold on to it. But his chance is gone. I tell him, in all candor, that he cannot be elected to the Speakership, and is not fit for the position; not meaning, however, to say that his private virtues and personal graces do not qualify him to fill that chair. But from his association with this abominable Helper book, and the manner in which he has been persistently pressed at this particular time, *he never can be Speaker*, and never should be called upon to preside over the deliberations of this body. To be elected at all, it must be by means of the plurality rule; and a vote upon the plurality rule, it is understood, must be a sneaking vote for SHERMAN. Now, sir, that plurality rule never can come to a vote. I do not hesitate to say that I was one of those, after the discussion arose in the house the other day, who sought out the paper referred to by the gentleman from Indiana, (Mr. COLFAX,) and that I placed my name to it, pledging myself to stand here day and night to oppose *by all lawful means* the adoption of the plurality rule; and I will stay here in this Hall, eat here, drink here, live here, and, if necessary, die here before I give my sanction, as a Representative from Virginia, to that rule, when I am satisfied that its adoption will result in the election of JOHN SHERMAN as Speaker of this House.

Mr. COLFAX. Will the gentleman allow me to ask him a question? I do not wish to interfere without the gentleman's consent.

Mr. BOTELER. Certainly.

Mr. COLFAX. Suppose any number of gentlemen, after it was organized, were satisfied that an appropriation bill reported by the Committee of Ways and Means contained an appropriation of money which would probably be used by the Federal Administration for corrupt purposes—I do not say that would be; I only put the case as a suppositious one—would you justify us in signing a written agreement, binding ourselves to each other that we would, by a factious opposition, prevent any vote ever being taken upon it, and thus prevent a majority from adopting it? If so, all legislation could be thus arrested.

Mr. BOTELER. You have to meet your own responsibility to your constituency, and I am responsible to mine. I can go back to mine, and hold up my head, with the full assurance in my heart that the position I have taken during this protracted struggle for the Speakership will be endorsed by every one of my constituents whose good opinion is worth an effort to retain. You can do the same.

But I have yet to learn that that is a majority side of the House. I am going upon the premises that *this* is the majority side of this House, and that the "factious" course is pursued by the other side. That is the "factious" side. True, it is a side with seventeen States represented by it; but I see not a single southern man affiliating with them—not one. I look upon the flag they carry, and I cannot recognize upon it the escutcheon of a single State south of Mason and Dixon's line.

But, Mr. Clerk, I am sorry I have been betrayed into these extended remarks. I assure gentlemen I rose not to bring the torch of discord among the members of the House, but to offer the olive branch of peace. I rose to make an appeal to gentlemen upon this side; to make an appeal to my distinguished friend from Ohio (Mr. CORWIN) before me; to my friends from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, some of whom were old college-mates, and whom I had not met before in twenty years, but whom I see now, to my great regret, upon that side of the House, voting and acting against the interests of my State. I came here, sir, to stand by those gentlemen from Pennsylvania and New Jersey in their rights and interests. I came here a tariff man, though not a protective man for protection's sake; not in favor of a high protective tariff, yet ready to lock my shield with theirs, and fight out the great question of protection to their interests. But I see them arrayed against my interests and the interests of my constituents; and how can they expect that I shall be found fighting zealously with them for their interests? Sir, I have said that I am in favor of protection. I desire that every man in this country of ours, from the Aroostook to the Gulf of Mexico—no matter what his occupation may be, whether he shoves the plow or throws the shuttle, whether he works in the mine, or, like myself, belongs to the great agricultural interests of the country—shall feel that his Government is with him and not against him. I would have every farmer throughout the land feel, as he scatters the golden grain in the furrows, that, next to the Providence of Almighty God, who sends the sunshine and the shower, the seed time and the harvest, this Government of ours discriminates *for* his interests, and *not against them*. I came here to vindicate that principle side by side with those whom I believed to be conservative men from the great States of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, (the old battle-ground of the Revolution, where my fathers stood with their shoulder to shoulder, in the snows of Trenton and the hot sands of Monmouth,) to vindicate that great principle of protection to American industry, in accordance with the necessities of the times. But I find you rallying behind a sectional banner, and giving aid and comfort to that intolerant sectional organization of the North, the fundamental principle of which is opposition to slavery—to the chartered rights and vested interests of Virginia—I cannot, therefore, expect that any appeal I make to you will be listened to.

MR. HALE. Will the gentleman from Virginia allow me to ask him a question?

MR. BOTELER. I certainly will permit the gentleman to ask me a question.

MR. HALE. You say you find us arrayed against your rights and interests, and that you came here to endeavor to promote the interests of Pennsylvania. I would like to know what rights or interests of Virginia the Pennsylvania members have attacked on this floor, or what rights they propose to attack? We have stood by you, as I understand. In your Harper's Ferry foray, as you call it, Pennsylvania acted the part of a sister State, according to the testimony of Governor Wise himself, and returned your fugitives from justice. Pennsylvania, sir, has always done her duty to her sister States; and I defy any gentleman from Virginia, or any other gentleman upon this floor, to show that in any respect Pennsylvania has failed in her duty to any sister State in any manner whatever. When gentlemen deal in general charges like these, they ought to specify wherein we are interfering with their rights.

MR. BOTELER. I recognize the fact—and it is a fact which affords me pleasure, a fact of which every Pennsylvanian may well be proud—that her Governor did his duty fully, fairly, faithfully in returning to Virginia the fugitives from her justice, and that he was sustained by the people of Pennsylvania in that patriotic act; and, sir, I came here prepared to testify to the State of Pennsylvania my grateful appreciation of the conduct of her Governor. I am still grateful to the people of Pennsylvania, whom, I believe, are misrepresented upon this floor by those who have from first to last acted

with the other side, to whom, however, there may be some exceptions. [Referring to those who had voted for Mr. GILMER.]

The gentleman asks me when he had acted contrary to the interests of Virginia? You have done it, sir, on every ballot in which you have given your vote for a sectional candidate, whom the people of Virginia must regard, if elected to that chair, as having been forced upon the country against their wishes, and against the protestation of every man, woman, and child within her borders.

Now, sir, a word to Massachusetts.

Mr. HALE. I would ask the gentleman if we are not the best judges of what our constituents desire.

Mr. VALLANDIGHAM. I rise to a question of order. I object to this interruption.

Mr. HALE. Has the gentleman the right to say—

(Loud cries of "Order!" from the Democratic benches.)

Mr. HALE. Has the gentleman the right to say—

(Cries of "Order!" "Order!")

Mr. VALLANDIGHAM. I insist upon the point of order.

Mr. BOTELEER. The election which returned these gentlemen here took place a month before the John Brown raid. The people of the North know, they must know now, they cannot fail now to see, what is the inevitable tendency of this slavery agitation. They have been told by you, the politicians, you the leaders—and we have allowed ourselves to be deluded by the syren song sung in our ears—that you do not intend to interfere with slavery within the States. Personally, I believe you do not. Personally, there is not a leader among you all—not even Fred Douglass—who can be found with courage enough to come into the southern States and interfere with slavery there. But, from year to year, you have beaten the drum of abolitionism in all the highways and byways of the North. From your pulpit and press and forum, in season and out of season, you have preached to the rising generation that slavery is a curse; and that anti-slavery sentiment has stimulated others, less careful of their personal safety, to come among us with a hostile intent, to steal our slaves and incite them to insurrection.

I can illustrate this by an incident which occurred in my own county the other day. That poor wretch, Coppie, a week or two before his execution, stood at the window of his prison, pressing his brow against the iron bars across it, looking out intently in the street at the happy groups of negroes assembled there, and after some time, he turned away and sobbed. A friend asked why he sobbed. "Sir," said he, "I have seen, day after day, the negroes in your streets, and they are better clad than the laboring people of the northern States; they are well cared for in every way, and see, oh! see how happy!" Said my friend, "What did you expect?" "Oh," said he, "I have been taught to believe that they were downtrodden and oppressed, and were ready to clutch at liberty, but they refused it when we offered them the boon."

Now, Mr. Clerk, who is responsible for this? On whose head is the blood of Coppie? There was not a man amongst the Harper's Ferry insurgents, except John Brown, who was not born since 1830, and who did not grow up under the influence of abolition preaching. This, sir, is a significant fact, which I commend to the thinking portion of my countrymen. There was not one of them who had not breathed the atmosphere of abolition, and who had not his mind poisoned against the South by such teachings. You do not care for the negro. You admit the fact. It is a most miserable hobby upon which you have ridden into power. Therefore, in the name of our common country, I demand that you disband your anti-slavery party and take down your piratical flag!

But a word now to Massachusetts: When, sir, I have heard the name of a gentleman called here, day after day, first on the roll—a great, historic name, (Mr. ADAMS)—I have been reminded of the “Old Bay State” in her prouder day in the heroic age of the Republic, and I have also been reminded of a historical incident connected with the county in which I live—that county selected by John Brown for his bloody raid—and feel that I have a right to make an especial appeal to the Massachusetts delegation here, if they are not deaf to the voice of consanguinity, and if they are, I appeal from them to their people on this question; I demand of *them* to come up to the rescue of the country now as they did in the good old times of their revolutionary fathers.

Sir, the district which I represent and the county where I live—that county made famous by the raid of Brown—was the first, the very first in all the South, to send succor to Massachusetts in the time of her direst necessity! In one of the most beautiful spots in that beautiful country, within rifle shot of my residence, at the base of a hill, where a glorious spring leaps out into sunlight from beneath the gnarled roots of a thunder-riven oak, there assembled on the 10th of July, 1775, the very first band of southern men who marched to the aid of Massachusetts. They met there, then, and their rallying cry was, “a bee-line for Boston.” That beautiful and peaceful valley—the “valley of the Shenandoah”—had never been polluted by the footsteps of a foe; for even the Indians themselves had, according to tradition, kept it free from the incursion of their enemies. It was the hunting range and neutral ground of the aborigines. The homes of those who lived there then were far beyond the reach of danger. But Boston was beleaguered! The hearths of your fathers were threatened with pollution, and the fathers of those whom I represent rallied to their protection—

“They left the plow-share in the mould,
Their flocks and herds without a fold,
The sickle in the unshorn grain,
Their corn half-garnered on the plain,
And mustered in their simple dress,
For wrongs of *yours* to seek redress.”

Thus they mustered around the spring I speak of; and from thence they made their “Bee-line for Boston.” Before they marched, they made a pledge that all who survived would assemble there fifty years after that day. It is my pride and pleasure to remember that I, though but a child then, was present at the spring when the fifty years rolled round. Three aged, feeble, tottering men—the survivors of that glorious band of one hundred and twenty—were all who were left to keep their tryste, and be faithful to the pledge made fifty years before to their companions, the bones of most of whom had been left bleaching on your northern hills.

Sir, I have often heard from the last survivor* of that band of patriots, the incidents of their first meeting and their march; how they made some six hundred miles in thirty days—twenty miles a day—and how, as they neared the camp at Cambridge, their point of destination, WASHINGTON, who happened to be making a reconnoissance in the neighborhood, saw them approaching, and recognising the linsey-woolsey hunting shirts of old Virginia, galloped up to meet and greet them to the camp; how, when he saw their captain, his old companion-in-arms, Hugh Stephenson, who had stood by his side at the Great Meadows, on Braddock’s fatal field, and in many an Indian campaign—and who reported himself to his commander as “*from the right bank of the Potomac*”—he sprang from his horse and clasped his old friend and fellow-soldier with both hands. He spoke no word of welcome; but the eloquence of silence told what his tongue could not articulate. He moved along the ranks, from man to man, shaking the hand of each, and all the while—as my informer told me—the big tears were seen rolling down his cheeks.

* The late Major Henry Bedinger, of Berkley county, Virginia.

Aye, sir, Washington wept! And why did the glorious soul of Washington swell with emotion? Why did he weep? Sir, they were tears of joy! and he wept because he saw that the cause of Massachusetts was practically the cause of Virginia; because he saw that her citizens recognized the great principles involved in the contest. These Virginia volunteers had come spontaneously; they had come in response to the words of her Henry, that were leaping like live thunder through the land, telling the people of Virginia that they must fight, and fight for Massachusetts. They had come to rally with Washington to defend your fathers' firesides; to protect your mothers' homes from harm.

Well, Mr. Clerk, *the visit has been returned!* John Brown selected that very county, whose citizens went so promptly to the aid of the North when the North needed aid, as the most appropriate place in all the South to carry out the doctrines of the "irrepressible conflict;" and as was mentioned in the Senate yesterday, the rock where Leeman fell at Harper's Ferry, was the very rock over which Morgan and his men marched a few hours after Stephenson's command had crossed the river some ten miles further up at Shepherdstown.

Sir, may this historical reminiscence rekindle the embers of patriotism in our hearts! Why should this nation of ours be rent in pieces by this irrepressible conflict? But is it irrepressible? Ah, sir, if it be, the battle will not be fought out upon this floor. For when the dark day comes, as come it may, when this question, that now divides and agitates the hearts of the people, shall be thrust from the forum of debate, to be decided by the bloody arbitrament of the sword, it will be the saddest day for us and all mankind that the sun of Heaven has ever shone upon.

I trust, Mr. Clerk, that this discussion will now cease. I trust that all will make an effort, by balloting, and by a succession of ballotings, to organize the House. I trust that we will go on in our efforts, day after day, until we do effect an organization, and proceed to perform the duties which we were sent here to discharge; that the great heart of our country will cease to pulsate with the anxiety which now causes it to throb; and that we will each, in our own appropriate sphere, do what we can to make ourselves more worthy of the inestimable blessings which a good God has given us, and which can only be enjoyed by a *free, a virtuous, and united* people. (Applause.)

From the National Intelligencer.

AN INCIDENT OF 1775.

The beautiful incident of our Revolutionary history so touchingly related by the Hon. Mr. Boteler, of Virginia, in his speech in the House of Representatives on the 25th ultimo, interested the esteemed Mrs. Sigourney, of Connecticut, so deeply that she gave to the story the attractive form of poetry, for the graces of which her fine genius is so widely known, and has so often been exemplified in our columns. Many friends, having perused the effusion in the hands of Mr Boteler, insisted on giving it to the public, and it is therefore subjoined, together with her letter to Mr. Boteler, consenting to its publication.

HARTFORD, February 20, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR: I thank you earnestly for the letter of the last survivor of that patriot band who nobly marched from the Ancient Dominion to the aid of Massachusetts in 1775. It is indeed very kind of you to send me such a precious gift, which shall be preserved with my most treasured autographs.

I recollect no incident in our Revolutionary history more graphic in its character than that with which you have so eloquently closed your speech of the 25th ultimo. The poem mentioned in your note is entirely at your disposal, and I am yours, with great respect,

L. H. SIGOURNEY.

HON. ALEX. R. BOTELER, of Virginia.

AN INCIDENT OF 1775.

BY L. H. S.

A gathering in Virginia's vales,
 Mid summer's velvet green,
 Where fair Potomac sparkling flows
 Its fringed banks between;
 For echoes from New England's hills
 Of strife and danger came,
 And HENRY's eloquence had stirr'd
 Men's souls like living flame.

'Then from the throng, with patriot zeal,
 Stood forth a noble band
 Twice sixty dauntless volunteers
 Enlisted heart and hand;
 Their's was no prompting thirst of fame!
 Of glittering gold no greed,
 "*For Massachusetts!*" was the cry,
 "*For Boston!*" in their need.

And each to each a sacred vow
 Made mid the parting pain,
 When fifty years away had sped
 To seek that spot again;
 Those that the shaft of Death might spare,
 Beneath yon oak tree's shade,
 Should meet beside the diamond spring—
 Such solemn tryste they made.

Oh! there was sorrow 'neath the roof
 Of many a household tent,
 And burning tears fell thick and fast
 When from their homes they went;
 But to their little ones they said,
 And bade them well take heed,
 "*Heaven will not smile on those who fail
 To help their brother's need.*"

Hundreds of miles, o're rock and stone,
 Through forests' thorny breast,
 O'er bridgeless streams, o'er trackless wilds,
 With patient toil they prest,
 While ever in their secret soul
 Gleam'd an unfaltering creed,
 Like pole-star of their weary course,
"To help our brothers' need."

The king of men, oppress'd with care,
 Rode forth at closing day,
 And saw Virginia's armed host
 Approach in firm array,
 And knew the bearing of their Chief,
 Who, on the fatal plain,
 Had fought with him by Braddock's side
 When blood fell down like rain.

Then, leaping from his lofty steed,
 He clasp'd him to his breast,
 And, one by one, each soldier's hand
 With greeting fervor prest.
 Why was the eye of Washington
 Suffus'd with gushing tear?
 Why heav'd that hero's heart so high
 That never throbb'd with fear?

He read God's blessing in the love
 Of that fraternal band;
 He mark'd the triumph through the gloom
 That wrapp'd an infant land;
 Perchance, with his prophetic glance
 Who erst on Nebo stood,
 Beheld a glorious realm unfold
 Like rainbow o'er the flood.

Years roll'd away, and lustrums fled,
 And half a century closed
 Its cycle, and, with swanlike dirge,
 Mid ages past reposed;
 But, true to their remembered tryste,
 Potomac's veterans drew
 Where, by the oak-tree's gnarled roots,
 The spring fresh crystals threw.

They came—but not twice sixty men,
 In martial vigor bold ;
 For some their bleaching bones had laid
 On Northern hillocks cold.
 They came. *Who came?* Three aged forms,
 By time and changes bow'd ;
 Yet was no winter in their heart,
 Though snows their temples shroud.

For power and wealth and honor blest
 The Country of their birth,
 Who proudly reared her starry crest
 Among the Queens of Earth ;
 And warmly rose their patriot prayer
 That long her sacred Ark,
 Immaculate, and angel-steer'd,
 Might ride the billows dark.

From the Richmond Whig.

“A BEE-LINE FOR BOSTON.”

BY A DAUGHTER OF VIRGINIA.

When our tyrants sought to rob us of the freedom of our land,
 And the soil of Massachusetts with our brethren's blood was stained,
 Well we know how to the battle flocked New England's gallant sons,
 And how fast the British soldiers fell before their trusty guns.
 Away in fair Virginia, by Potomac's lordly stream,
 To the ears of loyal brothers swift their cry for vengeance came ;
 And 'twas hard by Harper's Ferry, at that cry a noble band
 Of our brave Virginians gathered, to do battle for the land.

And 'twas in the homely language of the hardy pioneer,
 That “a bee-line now for Boston” rose as their rallying cheer.
 Ah! their march was long and weary, but the goal was reached at length,
 Where the Continental army was mustered in its strength.
 When the Leader saw the *linsey* the Virginia soldiers wore,
 Then his spirit filled with gladness, *for he knew that cloth of yore*,
 And he galloped up to meet them, but vainly strove to speak
 As he shook their hands in greeting, while tears bedewed his cheek.



'Twas thus for our common country
But, O! brothers of New England,
When a band of vile marauders, in th
Have conspired a plot to darken our h with death and woe;
And when hard by Harper's Ferry they essayed the hellish deed,
You forgot how erst Virginia sent you succor in your need;
For when our would-be murderers to a lawful death were doomed,
You cursed the destined victims, and for the traitors mourned.

O! beware how you would sever the band that makes us one,
For the despots o'er the water would rejoice to see it done.
And Virginia hearts—though beating with their ancient love for you,
And with fealty to the Union—*must to themselves be true.*
But ah! how in blood of brothers our right hands can be stain?
And say, who can rend our banner of stars and stripes in twain?
O! may curses from high Heaven fall on each traitorous heart,
That would lift a hand to sunder our blood-bought ties apart.

E. E. S.